

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01
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FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6859
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PLO US
SUBJ: PLO LEADERS ON PRESIDENT CARTER

REF: CAIRO 10642

1. RECENTLY, FATAH LEADERS ARAFAT AND KHALID AL-HASAN SPOKE POSITIVELY TO PRESS ABOUT PEACE PROCESS (REFTEL). ARAFAT EXPRESSED EAGERNESS FOR DIALOGUE WITH US AND AL-HASAN STATED PLO IS FORMING A GOVERNMENT-IN-EXILE IN 1977 AS PART OF -PALESTINE DESIRE SEACH FOR PEACEFUL SOLUTION OF ME PROBLEM".

2. SAME TWO FATAH LEADERS QUOTED AGAIN IN CAIRO PRESS JULY 1. IN PARIS, AL-HASAN CITED AS STATING PALESTINIAN PEOPLE HOLD GREAT HOPE FOR PRESIDENT

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CARTER DESPITE HIS OCCASIONAL INCONSISTENCY OR AMBIGUITY. IN LONDON, ARAFAT REPORTEDLY TOLD TELEVISION INTERVIEW THAT PRESIDENT CARTER IS THE FIRST PRESIDENT TO SPEAK OF THE PALESTINIANS AS A "PEOPLE" WHO HAVE RIGHT TO A HOMELAND. "IT IS OF EXTREME IMPORTANCE TO US," ARAFAT ADDED, THAT PRESIDENT CARTER IS A RELIGIOUS MAN (I.E., AND

THEREFORE TRUSTWORTHY). ONE OF THE GREATEST TRAGEDIES THAT THE PALESTINIANS SUFFER IS THAT THEY CANNOT BE BURIED IN THEIR OWN LAND, HE ADDED.

3. COMMENT: EXTERNAL EVIDENCE SUGGESTS ARAFAT AND AL-HASAN MAY NOW DELIBERATELY BE SIGNALLING THEY DISPOSED PLACE CONFIDENCE IN PRES CARTER, A STEP WHICH FATAH LEADERS HAVE RARELY DARED TO TAKE, IN VIEW HISTORIC PALESTINIAN SUSPICION OF US INTENTIONS. THORNY QUESTION OF ACCEPTANCE 242 AND RECOGNITION ISRAEL REMAIN, HOWEVER, IN OUR JUDGEMENT, DIFFICULT FOR ARAFAT TO TACKLE WITHOUT SOME INDICATION OF WHAT HE WOULD GET IN RETURN. USG IS ONLY PARTY, IN ARAFAT'S VIEW, WHICH COULD GIVE CREDIBLE ASSURANCES ON THESE ISSUES. HENCE ARAFAT'S FIXATION ON DIALOGUE WITH USG AND THUS POSSIBLE SIGNIFICANCE OF HIS AND AL-HASAN'S POSITIVE STATEMENTS ABOUT PRES CARTER.

EILTS

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Message Attributes

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Disposition Approved on Date:
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